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DDS PROBLEM SOLVING SEMINAR NO. 7

THE INFLUENCE OF DEPENDENTS ON EMPLOYEES

THE PROBLEM

1. Should the Agency take into account the influence of an employee's dependents on his role in the Agency to a greater extent than it does at present, and if so, to what extent, and how should this be done?

ASSUMPTION

2. The adverse influence of dependents on employees has become significant enough to make it a matter of concern to management.

FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

3. The mission of the Agency is paramount to the needs of the employee and his dependents.

4. Adverse influence of dependents do affect, to some degree, the employee's (1) flexibility, (2) attitude, and (3) performance.

5. Dependent-related problems are intensifying in relation to the changes taking place in today's social climate.

6. The problem is Agency-wide, affecting not only personnel in the field but also those in the Headquarters area as well.

7. Although there is no Agency-wide dependent-oriented briefing program, there are existing mechanisms in the Agency which do concern themselves to some extent with dependent-related problems: the Office of Security, the Office of Medical Services, the Office of Personnel, the Office of Training, the Office of Communications and some of the DDP Divisions. Most employees, however, are either unaware of or reluctant to use these services.

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DISCUSSION

8. The employee is the Agency's most valuable asset. Dependent-associated problems, no matter what their nature--medical or psychiatric, alcoholism, drug addiction, educational, behavioral attitude of spouse, as well as the myriad other problems discussed at the seminar--do, to some degree, affect his ability to do his job. It is to the Agency's benefit to assist the employee, where possible, in solving these problems.

9. Although there were no conclusive statistics concerning dependent-related problems readily available from Agency sources, it was the judgment of the seminar participants that the wide range of problems confronting the employee and his dependents are of significant proportions and that they are intensifying, both at Headquarters and in the field, in relation to changes in today's social climate. (For example, there is a drug problem in McLean as well as a drug problem [REDACTED]).

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10. At the present time there are several offices providing services which touch on dependents and their influence on the employee (see attachment). None of these services is geared primarily to the dependent and his welfare. Each concerns itself principally with the employee as an individual and not with dependents.

11. To minimize the adverse effects which dependents can have on the employee, the Agency should develop a program which could coordinate and use existing services to stimulate more positive attitudes on the part of adult dependents. The program should begin by making the adult dependents feel they are a vital part of the Agency team. Education of the employee and his dependents in the general mission of CIA and other appropriate items of topical interest should be the foundation of the program. The educational process must begin at the time of entering-on-duty and continue with periodic briefings throughout the employee's career. To be effective, these briefings should be not only relevant and mandatory for the employee but for the adult dependent as well.

12. Dependent participation can be fostered through such activities as the "Open House" briefings recently

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held by the various directorates. In addition, information on insurance benefit changes, Office of Medical Services consultative services, and other items of general interest, should be disseminated to dependents through the use of unclassified employee bulletins.

13. The agency should do as much as possible to give the employee and his dependents adequate preparation for overseas duty by providing them with meaningful cover briefings and overseas orientations. There should be general briefings of interest to all persons going overseas followed by specific area briefings which cover items ranging from medical and educational facilities and housing accommodations to cultural conditions in the area to which the family is being assigned. Selected mature dependents who have been to the area of assignment could be called upon to participate in these briefings.

14. It is important that dependent-related problems which can adversely affect the employee's role in the Agency be identified as early as possible to minimize their impact on the employee's component. To foster this, the Agency should, as an integral part of the program, create an environment which encourages employees to surface and discuss their dependent-related problems. These discussions must be held in an atmosphere of mutual trust and strict confidence. Although the mission of the Agency must come first, the organization should be as compassionate as possible in dealing with these problems without jeopardizing its mission.

CONCLUSIONS

15. Dependent-related problems have reached a magnitude that warrants taking action to minimize their effects upon the employee and the Agency.

16. The dependent's welfare does influence the employee's effectiveness. To help make this a positive influence, the Agency must make adult dependents understand they are felt to be a part of the organization and ensure that they are kept well informed.

17. The dependent briefings as they now exist are inadequate, and dependent-oriented services, such as they are, are generally unknown to the employee and his dependents.

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18. Dependent-related programs must not only be publicized but supported and enforced by executive management if they are to be effective.

RECOMMENDATIONS

19. It is recommended that:

- a. the Agency initiate a coordinated program to modify and expand existing programs to provide for the meaningful education of employees and their adult dependents. A good guide for such a program could be the Student and Wives Overseas Orientation Program (SWOOP) now used by the Office of Communications.
- b. the Office of Personnel develop an entrance-on-duty program providing germane and mandatory briefings for spouses and mature dependents as appropriate.
- c. the Office of Training be responsible for developing, from available Agency resources, country briefings of the Program Assisted Instruction (PAI) type with contributions on a current basis from each of the directorates complete with written material, slides, running dialogue, and contributions from stations regarding living conditions, cultural differences, medical facilities, and other matters of interest. Portions of this program should be mandatory for all mature adults accompanying employees assigned overseas.
- d. the Agency devise effective means to publicize the various services available through the Office of Medical Services, the Office of the General Counsel, the Office of Security, the Office of Personnel, and the Office of Training.

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- e. the employee be encouraged to make his dependent-related problems known to management and management, in turn, be as compassionate as possible without adversely affecting the mission of the Agency.

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Attachment: Dependent-related services and briefings provided by the Agency

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